

VII. FUTURE CONNECTIONS: THE STRATEGIC PLAN



The RTP strategies discussed in Chapter III represent the region’s collective vision for addressing our transportation needs within the constraints of committed, available, or reasonably available revenue sources. Despite the substantial commitments contained in the RTP, this level of investment does not meet the overall needs identified through the RTP development process. If we truly want to address the needs set forth in this RTP, then we must look towards additional strategies and investments to get us there. Often this will entail controversial and difficult choices that will push the envelope and test the boundaries of what is politically acceptable. For now, these elements are contained in the Strategic Plan with the recognition that they merit further study and that, over time and with further consensus building, these programs and policies may move forward into the constrained RTP.

This chapter provides a brief illustrative overview of the additional strategies and investments that the region would pursue if additional funding were to become available, and after further consensus building to solidify commitment around specific projects and policies. It is envisioned that future updates or amendments to the RTP would draw from the projects contained in the Strategic Plan; exceptions would be handled on a case-by-case basis. While there is no funding strategy attached to the Strategic Plan, this chapter discusses additional potential funding sources that merit further study and evaluation.

Unfunded System Preservation and Operations Needs

Beyond the investments proposed in the 2008 RTP, there is a shortfall of \$24 billion in highway system preservation, and a shortfall of \$8 billion in arterial and transit system preservation, through 2035. With the recognition that the costs of deferred maintenance could grow exponentially over time, investment in preservation should be given priority for new funding sources beyond those identified in the 2008 RTP.

Additionally, SCAG identified a shortfall of approximately \$6.7 billion in highway operations needs, and \$1.3 billion in regionally significant arterial and

transit operations needs, through 2035. SCAG, Caltrans, and our transportation planning partners will continue to evaluate corridor-level performance, develop corridor system management plans, and incorporate the resulting recommendations into future Plans and Programs.

Unfunded Capital Improvements

There are approximately \$190 billion in additional capital investment needs above what is identified in the financially constrained RTP. These projects address important transportation corridor needs in the region, but still face significant challenges in terms of local consensus on a preferred strategy, funding priority, or both, before potential inclusion in the RTP. Regionally significant major corridor improvements in the Strategic Plan are identified in Table 7.1 below. A more complete list is contained in the RTP Project List report available at www.scag.ca.gov/rtp2008.

TABLE 7.1 MAJOR STRATEGIC PLAN PROJECTS

Strategic Plan Project Description
• SR-60 Truck Lanes (I-710 to I-15)
• I-15 Truck Lanes (SR-60 to Barstow)
• US-101 HOT Lanes (SR-23 to SR-134/SR-170)
• Purple Line Extension to Century City and Santa Monica
• Gold Line Extension to Ontario Airport
• Metrolink and LOSSAN Strategic Plans
• Santa Paula Branch Line
• High Speed Regional Transport - system extensions to Palmdale, Victorville, Coachella Valley, Imperial, Orange County, San Diego
• High Speed Regional Transport - California High Speed Rail Authority (serving the SCAG region beyond the Union Station-Anaheim segment in the financially constrained RTP)
• High Speed Regional Transport - California-Nevada Maglev - Ontario Airport to Nevada State Line



Strategic Land-Use/Growth Vision

While the 2008 RTP Policy Growth Alternative provides a significant step towards meeting the region's mobility and air quality goals, much more can be done through land-use policy to maximize the efficiency of our transportation infrastructure. The Envision Growth Alternative represents an enhanced growth scenario for the SCAG region that builds upon the Policy Growth Forecast and uses bold strategies to further benefit mobility and air quality.

The Envision Alternative is founded on the trends, local input and policy direction of the Plan Alternative, then adjusts densities and infill rates in order to present a bold vision for the future. In essence, Envision is a combination of

the two test scenarios used in developing the Policy Growth Forecast, focusing significant growth on both existing and planned transit areas and regional employment centers. The growth redistributions that shape the Envision scenario consist of shifting future growth from areas with typically long commutes to transit station-adjacent areas with transit-oriented development (TOD) potential and to significant employment centers with existing capacity.

Envision provides a more aggressive reference point for linking transportation and land-use planning, and was tested via SCAG's four-step transportation model. As expected, combining the strategies of the TOD and Employment Centers test scenarios resulted in benefits greater than either scenario had provided alone, with a significant reduction of 31.3 million miles of daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Direction gleaned from analysis of the Envision EIR Growth Scenario suggested a 2008 RTP Policy Growth Forecast that would capture the majority of the benefits of Envision without moving ahead of current political constraints and emerging development trends. In other words, the best scenario would retain the consensus input of the Workshop Growth Scenario, while importing the mixed use and infill strategies in specific TOD areas and Employment Centers

Strategic Finance

Recognizing that new sources of revenue over and above those already identified in the RTP are required to help fund these unmet needs, SCAG will initiate a comprehensive study of congestion pricing strategies over the next year. A region-wide congestion pricing strategy can be structured to help the region meet its transportation demand management and air quality goals while providing a reliable and dedicated revenue source. The pricing mechanism could allow users of the transportation system to know the true cost of their travel, resulting in informed decision-making and more efficient use of the system. Potential pricing strategies can include a regional vehicle-miles-traveled fee and/or a regional high-occupancy toll lane network. While promising, these strategies still face a number of significant hurdles—there is currently no leg-

islative authority to implement such strategies, and there is no regional entity that exists to administer or implement such a comprehensive program. SCAG's study will attempt to address some of these hurdles by evaluating the feasibility of these strategies and coalescing regional consensus for potential input into the next update of the RTP.

In addition to SCAG's regional congestion pricing initiative, a number of local efforts to study additional transportation revenues are under way or may be in the near future. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) is evaluating the feasibility of a Congestion Mitigation Fee as part of a proposed restructuring of its Congestion Management Program (CMP). If enacted, the fee would be imposed on new development and would generate new revenue to assist MTA in addressing congestion caused by growth. In 2004, the voters in Ventura County were asked to approve a local sales tax measure for transportation. While the voters did not approve the sales tax increase, it remains a popular option for the region's counties to generate a significant amount of revenues dedicated to transportation. All of the other counties in the SCAG region have a local sales tax measure dedicated to transportation.

Corridor Preservation

For those corridor projects identified in the Strategic Plan, right-of-way preservation should be undertaken to begin laying the groundwork for advancing these long-range improvements. The SCAG region is pursuing an innovative, environmentally sensitive approach to considering future development and transportation projects. This approach envisions that transportation options will be developed with consideration for environmentally sensitive land-uses and habitat issues as part of the planning and design criteria. It would involve early and active involvement by all stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels.

This approach draws on the Community and Environmental Transportation Acceptability Process (CETAP) undertaken in Riverside County, which serves as a template for other agencies and jurisdictions seeking to preserve rights-



of-way for long-range transportation needs. The four CETAP corridors, two intra-county corridors—the Mid-County Parkway and the Winchester-Temecula Corridor—and two inter-county corridors—the Riverside County-Orange County Corridor and the Moreno Valley-San Bernardino Corridor—are included in the financially constrained RTP.

As Riverside County has shown, it is important to identify and preserve transportation corridors needed to expand or enhance transportation for future generations. Local governments will find it difficult to obtain optimal locations for these corridors unless efforts to preserve them are made early. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Report on Corridor Preservation states that early efforts provide the following benefits:



where local governments have an opportunity to obtain available land for new transportation facilities.

The first step in this kind of planning is to identify potential long-range corridors and determine if there is a need to preserve them. This will require intergovernmental coordination and should include a funding component. Next, criteria to evaluate and prioritize the selected corridors must be developed. Once a corridor is selected, environmental studies will be needed. Traditional preservation techniques include purchasing land or using government statutes to place a corridor alignment on a general plan land-use map. Other State and federal funds can be used to assist in acquiring land for long-range corridors.

- prevent inconsistent development
- minimize or avoid environmental, social and economic impacts
- prevent the loss of desirable corridor locations
- allow for the orderly assessment of impacts
- permit orderly project development, and
- reduce costs

Planners and policy-makers should start preparing strategies for preserving corridors now to prevent losing rights-of-way needed for transportation beyond the year 2035. Rights-of-way preservation is a reasonable concern, particularly in areas where development may block a long-range corridor. More opportunities to capitalize on preservation are available in less-urban areas,